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DE RUEHC 4356/BI 3351021  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
A 010612Z DEC 78  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO RUS3LK/AMEMBASSY KABUL 6410  
INFO RUS3QD/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 2545  
RUQMHR/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN 8391  
RUSBAE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4725  
RUMJCK/AMEMBASSY DACCA 7116  
RUEHMC/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 3754  
RUMJPG/USLO PEKING 3985  
RUQMGU/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 6935  
RUHQHQA/ CINCPAC HONOLULU HAWAII 1843  
RUSMAAA/USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE  
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 304356/BI

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, EAID, AF, US

SUBJECT: ASSESSMENT OF AFGHAN DEVELOPMENTS AND U.S.-AFGHAN RELATIONS

REFS: (A) STATE 240411; KABUL 7370

1. WE AGREE WITH THE BROAD OUTLINES OF YOUR ASSESSMENT OF THE GENERAL DIRECTION OF DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN AND THE UNCERTAIN PROSPECTS FOR A RETURN TO CLOSE U.S.-AFGHAN RELATIONS. NEVERTHELESS, WE STILL FIND OURSELVES UNSURE ABOUT THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME, EVEN ASSUMING THAT THE PRESENT REGIME MAINTAINS ITS HOLD ON POWER, AND WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD WORK FROM THE PREMISE THAT A CONSTRUCTIVE U.S.-AFGHAN WORKING RELATIONSHIP COULD STILL EMERGE. WE WONDER, IF AND WHEN THE SITUATION GETS A BIT MORE, WHETHER THE DRA WILL BECOME A DOCTILE CAMP-FOLLOWER DOMINATED BY THE USSR, OR A RADICAL-LEFTIST REGIME ON THE FRINGE OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT BUT WITH PECULIAR AFGHAN CHARACTERISTICS AND A DEGREE OF INDEPENDENCE. THE MOST ADVERSE DEVELOPMENT IN TERMS OF OUR INTERESTS WOULD BE THE INTRODUCTION OF SOVIET COMBAT TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN, WHICH WOULD SERIOUSLY DISTURB THE ENTIRE REGION.

2. WE SEE, AS YOU DO, OUR REGIONAL INTERESTS AS PARAMOUNT IN OUR CONSIDERATION OF A PROPER APPROACH TO THE DRA AND WOULD VIEW AN IRIDENTIST AFGHANISTAN, ESPECIALLY ONE BACKED BY THE SOVIETS, AS A SERIOUS THREAT TO PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE AREA. WE BELIEVE THIS IS A REAL FEAR

ESPECIALLY IN PAKISTAN AND ALSO IN IRAN.

3. THE ASSESSMENTS OF AFGHANISTAN'S NEIGHBORS ARE SIMILAR TO OURS ALTHOUGH PAKISTAN AND IRAN CONTEND THAT AFGHANISTAN IS ALREADY IRREVOCABLY "LOST" TO THE SOVIET UNION. PAKISTAN SEEMS TO WANT US TO SHARE THEIR ASSESSMENT OF THE THREAT, PRESUMABLY TO OBTAIN A GREATER U.S. COMMITMENT TO PAKISTAN'S SECURITY. AT NO TIME HAVE THE PAKISTANIS QUESTIONED OUR POLICY OF MAINTAINING THE U.S. PRESENCE IN

AFGHANISTAN. THE INDIANS SEEM SOMEWHAT MORE SANGUINE ABOUT BEING ABLE TO DEAL WITH THE DRA BUT, NOTWITHSTANDING, ARE VERY DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT INCREASED SOVIET INFLUENCE IN KABUL. WE NEED TO KEEP THESE VIEWS IN MIND WHEN JUDGING POSSIBLE REGIONAL REACTIONS TO ANY CHANGES IN OUR OWN POLICIES TOWARD AFGHANISTAN.

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4. THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION ARE IN FACT FOLLOWING POLICIES QUITE SIMILAR TO OUR OWN. IRAN IS CONTINUING AID ALREADY COMMITTED ALTHOUGH HOLDING BACK FROM NEW AGREEMENTS. INDIA HAS APPARENTLY OFFERED TO STEP UP ITS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN AFGHANISTAN AND HAS IN OUR VIEW BEEN PLAYING A VERY HELPFUL ROLE IN ATTEMPTING TO ENCOURAGE SOME DEGREE OF INDEPENDENCE AND NON-ALIGNMENT BY THE NEW REGIME. PAKISTAN IS ACTIVELY PURSUING A POLICY OF FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE DRA (EXPEDITING TRANSIT OF AFGHAN TRADE, #43811, 5 "8"-5 SEPTEMBER 10 VISIT, DOWN-PLAYING OF AFGHAN REFUGEES, RESTRAINED RHETORIC) AND APPEARS TO SEE SUCH A POLICY AS IN ITS INTEREST.

5. ONE OPTION WOULD BE FOR US TO PHASE OUT OUR ACTIVITIES IN AFGHANISTAN, BUT WE BELIEVE THIS WOULD BE VERY UNSETTLING TO AFGHANISTAN'S NEIGHBORS AND INCOMPATIBLE WITH THEIR POLICIES. THE DRA HAS NOT ASKED US TO PACK OUR BAGS AND LEAVE BUT ON THE CONTRARY HAS ACCEPTED OUR POLICY OF MAINTAINING OUR

INTEREST AND PRESENCE. CLOSING OUT OUR EFFORTS IN AFGHANISTAN WOULD LIKELY BE SEEN AS AN ABDICATION OF OUR RESPONSIBILITY AND WOULD ACCOMPLISH FOR THE SOVIETS ONE OF THEIR PRIMARY OBJECTIVES, NAMELY TO REDUCE FURTHER U.S. AND WESTERN INFLUENCE IN AFGHANISTAN (MOSCOW 23479) AND THE REGION. IT WOULD NOT BE IN OUR INTEREST TO GIVE SUCH A BLANK CHECK SIGNAL TO MOSCOW.

6. CONSEQUENTLY, WE BELIEVE THE GENERAL APPROACH ADVOCATED IN STATE 211182 REMAINS VALID AS A FRAMEWORK FOR U.S. POLICY. WE SHOULD NOT PRESS OUR AID ON THE AFGHANS BUT

WE SHOULD SEEK OPPORTUNITIES TO MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH THE DRA, TRY TO ESTABLISH MUTUALLY COMPATIBLE OBJECTIVES FOR

OUR ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, AND IDENTIFY PROJECTS WHICH SATISFY OUR AID MANDATE, OUR HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY AND THEIR CONCERNS. WE FULLY RECOGNIZE THAT THE AFGHANS THEMSELVES SEEM TO BE MOVING TO REDUCE OUR PRESENCE: A MUCH SMALLER PEACE CORPS PROGRAM; NO MILITARY TRAINING FOR AFGHANS IN THE U.S. FOR THE MOMENT, AND RESTRICTIONS ON THE DAO OFFICE; A MORE LIMITED CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM; AND A RESISTANCE TO PROPOSED USAID PROJECTS INCORPORATING LARGE AMOUNTS OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. FOR OUR PART, WE WILL ALSO HAVE TO BALANCE OUR HUMANITARIAN CONCERN IN HELPING THE PEOPLE OF ONE OF THE WORLD'S POOREST COUNTRIES WITH OUR

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RUSBAZ/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4726

RUHJDK/AMEMBASSY DACCA 7117

RUENHO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 3755

RUHLJ/USLO PEKING 3936

RUHMBU/AMEMBASSY AHKARA 6936

RUHQQA/ CINCPAC HONOLULU KAWAII 1844

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CONCERN ABOUT THE NEW REGIME'S QUESTIONABLE HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE. THE AFGHANS SHOULD BE KEPT FULLY AWARE OF THESE CONCERNS IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LEADERSHIP.

7. WE REGARD THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AS AN EVOLVING ONE WHICH REQUIRES OUR CONTINUING ATTENTION AS WELL AS A CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH OTHER STATES IN THE REGION. WE ENCOURAGE EMBASSIES TEHRAN, ISLAMABAD, AND NEW DELHI IN PARTICULAR TO CONTINUE EXCHANGING VIEWS WITH HOST GOVERNMENTS ON THE CHANGING AFGHAN SCENE, KEEPING IN MIND THAT OUR INFLUENCE IN KABUL IS SEVERELY LIMITED AND THAT WE

LOOK TO AFGHANISTAN'S NEIGHBORS TO TAKE THE LEAD IN DEVELOPING A NETWORK OF COOPERATIVE RELATIONS WHICH WILL CONTRIBUTE TO PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE REGION. VANCE  
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